



PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Brad Sherwood
707.521.6204

Agency Responds to Minor Chlorine Leak at Geyserville Wastewater Treatment Plant *Less Than One Pound of Chlorine Released*

Santa Rosa, CA – The Sonoma County Water Agency’s (Agency) Emergency Response Team responded to a minor chlorine leak at the Geyserville Wastewater Treatment Plant on Wednesday, February 7. The Agency was alerted to the chlorine leak at approximately 10:30 p.m. by its chlorine detection alarm system. The Agency immediately responded and took action to find and contain the source of the leak. The source was found to be a defective gas storage cylinder located in a storage building. The faulty gas cylinder was placed in a containment vessel. Agency personnel estimate that less than one pound of chlorine leaked.

The Agency contacted the County Department of Emergency Services and it was determined that there was no immediate threat to the public because the leak was contained in the storage building. The County Department of Emergency Services manages emergency public outreach services for the Agency. Operating procedures require reporting chlorine discharges when they exceed ten pounds.

“The Emergency Response Team is trained and ready to handle emergencies involving chlorine leaks,” said Pam Jeane, deputy chief engineer of operations. “Our staff performed a superb job in finding the leak and securing the cylinder.”

Although a minor amount of chlorine leaked, the Agency treats all chlorine leaks the same. With a professionally trained staff of eight, the Agency’s Emergency Response Team trains throughout the year in order to effectively prepare to respond and manage chlorine leaks.

“Protecting our staff and community is priority number one during an emergency,” said Jeane. “The Agency takes these leaks very seriously and ensures that our response teams have the best training available in order to respond to emergencies,” said Jeane.

The Agency assumed responsibility of managing the Geyserville Wastewater Treatment Plant in 1995. The plant began operation in 1978 and serves 177 acres and 337 single-family dwellings.

About Chlorine at the Geyserville Wastewater Treatment Plant:

- Chlorine is used to disinfect treated wastewater.
- Chlorine is securely stored and contained in cylinders that can hold a maximum of 150 pounds.
- The Agency uses a vendor, Pioneer, to provide the chlorine cylinders.

General Chlorine Facts:

- Chlorine gas can be pressurized and cooled to change it into a liquid so that it can be shipped and stored. When liquid chlorine is released, it quickly turns into a gas that stays close to the ground and spreads rapidly.
- Chlorine gas can be recognized by its pungent, irritating odor, which is like the odor of bleach. The strong smell may provide an adequate warning to people that they have been exposed.
- Chlorine gas appears to be yellow-green in color.
- Chlorine itself is not flammable, but it can react explosively or form explosive compounds with other chemicals such as turpentine and ammonia.

For more information about chlorine, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website: <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/chlorine/basics/facts.asp>.

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